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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 5 September 1991 from the Permanent Representatives of Brazil and of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the joint communiqué issued at Stockholm, on World Environment Day, 5 June 1991, by President Fernando Collor of Brazil and Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson of Sweden, together with Mr. Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 78 (e) and 79 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Ronaldo Mota SARDENBERG
Permanent Representative of
Brazil to the United Nations

(Signed) Jan ELIASSON
Permanent Representative of
Sweden to the United Nations

* A/46/150.

READEX FICHE

ANNEX

Joint communiqué issued at Stockholm on 5 June 1991 by the President of Brazil, the Prime Minister of Sweden and the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

1. Nineteen years ago, on this day, delegates from all over the world gathered here at Stockholm for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. A few years before, the people of this planet had seen the first pictures taken from space of our one and single common home, "small and blue and beautiful". No wonder that the Conference theme became "Only One Earth".

2. The results of the 1972 Conference were of historic importance. The Stockholm Declaration laid down principles for the responsibilities of States that have never been challenged. The environment was firmly placed on the international agenda and its relationship to development acknowledged. The United Nations Environment Programme was created. Important conventions were signed in the follow-up to the Conference. A new awareness of the fragility of the world's ecological system began to influence minds and policies.

3. The world today is very different from that of 1972. Tremendous political and economic changes have taken place. But the impact of the Stockholm Conference has been felt throughout the period; environmental damage at the local and regional levels has been checked in many parts of the world, where progress, wealth and advanced technologies allowed countries to take effective action. Nevertheless, in other parts of the same world, most countries continued to face enormous economic and social problems, thus being unable to give the environment, in spite of increasing public awareness, the priority it might otherwise have deserved.

4. But all these efforts cannot conceal the fact that the planet's future is still at risk. Over the last decade new and global threats have been perceived and others have become more acute, such as ozone layer depletion, climate change, pollution of the oceans on a global scale, reduction of biological diversity, degradation of land resources. The realization of those problems, whose consequences go far beyond national boundaries, leads to the realization of a sense of common responsibility towards the conservation of the planet's environment. The international community has to act as one and tackle those problems in all their interrelated aspects if we are to keep alive the hope of a better environment for the generations to come.

5. Furthermore, we have begun to understand better that global environmental action requires global development action. Poverty is in itself both a cause and a consequence of environment deterioration. The gravity of the detrimental effects of this vicious circle is particularly evident in the fast-growing cities of the developing world, in which living conditions have been continuously deteriorating, sometimes to levels well below the minimum requirements of human dignity. Individual responsibility for the environment,

which is the basis for effective action, cannot be expected from people who see no hope of a better life. Solidarity at the international and national levels is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

6. Following the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, all these strands came together in the resolution by the General Assembly to convene the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that Brazil will host at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. If the Stockholm Conference consolidated the inclusion of the environment in the international agenda, the Rio de Janeiro Conference is to be seen as a bridge between global environmental concerns, the many different initiatives already under way to face them and a joint and concerted action by the whole international community aimed at the promotion of new and environmentally sound models of economic development.

7. The unique amplitude and comprehensiveness of the agenda set forth for the 1992 Conference stand as a signal of the high hopes of the whole international community.

8. As the torch is now being passed, from Stockholm to Rio de Janeiro, from the Baltic to the Atlantic, from North to South, Sweden and Brazil are united in a joint commitment to the cause of environment and development. The President of Brazil and the Prime Minister of Sweden together with the Secretary-General of the Conference solemnly pledge to spare no effort to make the Conference a success and to cooperate closely in order to achieve decisions on concrete and effective action at Rio de Janeiro. The Conference is firmly placed in the perspective of the twenty-first century. On this World Environment Day 1991 we look towards the Conference as the dawn of a new era of international cooperation, a true global partnership for environment and development. The future of our Earth is in our hands.

(Signed) Fernando COLLOR
President of the Federative
Republic of Brazil

(Signed) Ingvar CARLSSON
Prime Minister of Sweden

(Signed) Maurice STRONG
Secretary-General of the
United Nations Conference on
Environment and Development